

Kohlrabi



History

Kohlrabi originated in northwestern Europe – most likely in Germany. In fact, the name “kohlrabi” is made up of two German words: “kohl” meaning cabbage and “rube” meaning “turnip.” The word “kohlrabi” literally translates to “cabbage turnip.” This name is very appropriate as kohlrabi is a member of the cabbage family but has a large edible bulb that resembles a turnip. However, unlike the turnip, kohlrabi is not a root vegetable. The large bulb is actually part of the stem, not the root system.

Kohlrabi was being grown throughout Germany, England, Italy, and Spain by the early 1600s, but it did not make its way to the United States until the 1800s. Records show that kohlrabi has been growing in the US since 1806. Kohlrabi is not an extremely popular crop in the US, but can be found in grocery stores, especially during late summer and early fall.

Selection

Kohlrabi can be sliced and eaten raw but is more commonly cooked and added to soups and other dishes. It also tastes best when harvested while still young. Large, older kohlrabi is tough and woody and frequently has a bitter flavor. However, when a young kohlrabi is eaten raw, it maintains its crisp, juicy texture – similar to that of an apple. Some people compare the taste of kohlrabi to a turnip while others believe it tastes like a mixture of cucumber and broccoli.

Fun Facts

- Kohlrabi leaves can be harvested and cooked
- Kohlrabi comes in two main varieties: white and purple
- White kohlrabi is actually a light green color
- European chefs use purple kohlrabi leaves as a garnish
- Small kohlrabi bulbs do not need to be peeled before eating
- Kohlrabi is related to cabbage, broccoli, kale, cauliflower, and Brussels sprouts
- Kohlrabi has spread to Asia and is included in Indian cooking
- Kohlrabi is a good source of vitamin C and potassium



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